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COMMITTEE FOR PROGRAMME AND COORDINATION
Resumed thirty-second session
31 August-18 September 1992
Agenda item 9

ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON ITS RESUMED THIRTY-SECOND SESSION

Draft report

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

I. ORGANIZATION OF THE SESSION

1. The Committee for Programme and Coordination held its resumed thirty-second session at United Nations Headquarters from 31 August to 18 September 1992. It held ___ meetings (22nd to ____ meetings), and a number of informal consultations.

A. Agenda

2. The agenda for the resumed thirty-second session is reproduced in annex I.

B. Attendance

3. The following States members of the Committee were represented:

Algeria	Cameroon	Germany
Argentina	Chile	Ghana
Bahamas	China	India
Brazil	Colombia	Indonesia
Bulgaria	Congo	Iraq
Burundi	France	Italy

Japan	Poland	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland
Morocco	Russian Federation	United States of America
Netherlands	Sri Lanka	Uruguay
Nigeria	Trinidad and Tobago	Zambia
Norway	Uganda	
Pakistan	Ukraine	

4. The following States Members of the United Nations were represented by observers:

Australia	Hungary	Spain
Austria	Ireland	Sweden
Canada	Latvia	Togo
Bolivia	Mexico	Venezuela
Finland	Portugal	

5. The following specialized agencies were represented:

Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations

United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

World Health Organization

6. Also present at the session were the Under-Secretary-General for Administration and Management, the Acting Controller and other senior officials of the United Nations Secretariat, including representatives of the United Nations Development Programme.

C. Documentation

7. The list of documents before the Committee at its resumed thirty-second session is contained in annex II.

D. Adoption of the report of the Committee

8. At its ____ meeting, on __ September 1992, the Committee adopted the draft report on its resumed thirty-second session (E/AC.51/1992/L.5 and Add.1-___).

ANNEX I

Agenda for the resumed thirty-second session of the Committee

1. Organization of work.

2. Programme questions:

   (a) Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997;

   (b) Outline of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995;

   (c) Methodology for the preparation of the programme budget;

   (d) Questions related to the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993.

3. Coordination questions:

   (a) Question of the timing and selection of a topic for the twenty-seventh series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination;

   (b) System-wide plan of action for African economic recovery and development.

4. Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

5. Adoption of the report of the Committee on its resumed thirty-second session.

ANNEX II

List of documents before the Committee at its resumed thirty-second session

A/47/6	Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997
Programme 1	Good offices and peacemaking, peace-keeping, research and the collection of information
Programme 2	Political and Security Council affairs
Programme 3	Political and General Assembly affairs and secretariat services
Programme 4	Special political questions, trusteeship and decolonization
Programme 5	Question of Palestine
Programme 6	Elimination of apartheid
Programme 7	Disarmament
Programme 8	Peaceful uses of outer space
Programme 12	Global development issues and policies
Programme 13	Trade and development
Programme 14	Development finance, resource flows and external debt
Programme 15	Least developed, land-locked and island developing countries, and special programmes
Programme 16	Environment
Programme 17	Science and technology for sustainable development
Programme 18	Population
Programme 19	Natural resources
Programme 20	Energy
Programme 21	Public administration and finance
Programme 22	Human settlements

Programme 23	Transnational corporations
Programme 24	Statistics
Programme 28	International drug control
Programme 30 and Corr.1	Regional cooperation for development in Africa
Programme 32 and Corr.1	Regional cooperation for development in Europe
Programme 33 and Add.1	Regional cooperation for development in Latin America and the Caribbean
Programme 36	International protection of and assistance to refugees
Programme 37	Disaster relief and mitigation, and special emergency programmes
Programme 38	Public information
Programme 45	Africa: critical economic situation, recovery and development
A/47/358	Report of the Secretary-General on the proposed programme budget outline for the biennium 1994-1995
A/C.5/47/2	Report of the Secretary-General containing revised estimates as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 46/185 and 46/232
A/C.5/47/3	Report of the Secretary-General containing a prototype of a new budget format
A/C.5/47/4	Note by the Secretary-General on procedures and norms for the creation, suppression, reclassification, conversion and redeployment of posts
A/C.5/47/7	Report of the Secretary-General concerning 13 posts formerly attached to the subprogramme on trade among countries having different economic and social systems
E/AC.51/1992/1	Provisional agenda
E/AC.51/1992/5	Report of the Secretary-General on the system-wide plan of action for African economic recovery and development
E/AC.51/1992/L.2/Rev.2	Note by the Secretariat on the status of documentation

E/AC.51/1992/L.5 and 1-...	Draft report of the Committee on its resumed thirty-second session
E/AC.51/1992/CRP.3/Rev.1	Proposed programme of work of the Committee
E/AC.51/1992/CRP.4	Consideration of the proposed revisions to programme 11 (Overall issues and policies, including coordination) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997
E/AC.51/1992/INF/2	List of delegations

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Addendum

Rapporteur: Miss Sally E. MOSS (Bahamas)

III. COORDINATION QUESTIONS

A. Question of the timing and selection of a topic for the twenty-seventh series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination

1. At its 28th and 29th meetings, on 3 and 4 September, the Committee considered preparations for the Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination, as well as the timing and selection of a topic for the twenty-seventh series of Joint Meetings.

Discussion

2. A number of delegations suggested as a possible topic the functioning and role of the Administrative Committee on Coordination. Another delegation suggested that if the Joint Meetings were to take place in October 1992, a possible topic might be the preparations for the world summit for social development.

Conclusions and recommendations

3. The Committee expressed regret that it had not been in a position to decide on the topic and timing of the twenty-seventh series of Joint Meetings at its session in May because, inter alia, it had been informed at that time that the second regular session of 1992 of the Administrative Committee on Coordination had not been planned.

4. The Committee was of the view that adequate preparatory work for the Joint Meetings was necessary.

5. The Committee had before it four topics suggested by the Administrative Committee on Coordination for the Joint Meetings: (a) commodity problems and their consequences for development; (b) results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and their implications for the United Nations system; (c) follow-up to the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development; and (d) investment in human development.

6. The Committee felt that, for the Joint Meetings to engage in an effective and fruitful discussion, only one topic should be selected.

7. The Committee decided to propose to the Administrative Committee on Coordination that the twenty-seventh series of Joint Meetings of the Committee for Programme and Coordination and the Administrative Committee on Coordination be held in the spring of 1993 to discuss the results of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and their implications for the United Nations system.

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II. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

A. Questions related to the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993

B. Review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations

General

1. At its 29th to 32nd meetings, on 4, 8 and 9 September, the Committee considered the following documents:

(a) Report of the Secretary-General on revised estimates as requested by the General Assembly in resolutions 46/185 and 46/232 (A/C.5/47/2);

(b) Note by the Secretary-General on procedures and norms for the creation, suppression, reclassification, conversion and redeployment of posts (A/C.5/47/4);

(c) Report of the Secretary-General on section 15 (UNCTAD) relating to the 13 posts formerly attached to the subprogramme on trade among countries having different economic and social systems (A/C.5/47/7).

2. The Committee was informed by the Secretariat that the need for more flexibility in the use of the staff resources of the Organization had to be seen in the context of a number of factors, including the persistent financial difficulties of the United Nations and the increase in the overall demand for the human resources of the Secretariat. It was indicated in the report on revised estimates that a dynamic policy for filling vacant posts would be warranted "by the fact that the staff resources of the Organization are, in many domains of activity, stretched to the limit, including in relation to dramatic increase in peace-keeping operations" (A/C.5/47/2, para. 19). In this regard, it was noted that on 15 August 1992, 235 Professional staff members were assigned to peace-keeping operations, in addition to 222 persons recruited from outside the Secretariat for those operations. Those 235 staff members represented approximately 6 per cent of the established Professional posts financed from the regular budget. Moreover, also on 15 August 1992, 1,394 staff members in the General Service and related categories were assigned to those operations.

3. With regard to the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, the commitment of the Secretary-General to reform had been reaffirmed. Reporting to Member States on reform was considered part of his mandate. Yet at the present time, the Secretary-General did not intend to submit a specific report to the General Assembly under that agenda item since the restructuring exercise, which implied the ongoing review of efficiency, was still under way. The Committee was informed by the Secretariat that an explanatory note thereon would be submitted to the General Assembly at its forty-seventh session. The Assembly would, moreover, consider the report on workload analysis.

Discussion

4. A number of delegations stated that the report on revised estimates, apart from the financial implications of the first phase of restructuring, should have contained more information on its programmatic aspects in conformity with resolution 46/232. A number of delegations supported the initiatives of the Secretary-General and the steps undertaken to reorganize the Secretariat in order to improve its effectiveness in the implementation of mandates obtained from the legislative bodies. They stated that the restructuring exercise was the prerogative of the Secretary-General in his capacity as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization. A number of delegations suggested that the Secretary-General should be allowed more discretionary powers with regard to the organization of the Secretariat, comparable to the practice in other organizations of the United Nations family.

5. A number of delegations expressed concern that the delivery of programmes might be affected by the restructuring, particularly in the economic and social sectors, and that the redeployment of staff might result in a certain disequilibrium between units of the Secretariat and even have certain demoralizing effects on staff members. A number of delegations stressed their

expectation that the Secretary-General's decision to suspend external recruitment would be called off as soon as possible so as to permit the inflow of younger people and additional talent as well as to rectify existing inequalities in the geographical distribution of posts that the "freeze" tended to petrify.

6. A number of delegations regretted the lack of a report reviewing the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations, the submission of which to the Committee on Programme and Coordination and the General Assembly had been requested by the Committee in its conclusions at the thirty-first session, which had been endorsed by the Assembly at its forty-sixth session.

7. A number of delegations expressed support for the reduction in high-level posts. While a number of delegations expressed appreciation of the accompanying reduction in terms of resulting savings, other delegations stated that budgetary reductions should not be conceived as a primary goal of the restructuring exercise.

8. A number of delegations agreed with the statement that the delays in payment of assessments constituted one of the main causes for the Secretariat's lack of effectiveness. Other delegations disagreed with that statement.

9. One delegation proposed that a new publication be prepared by the United Nations containing a world economic and social survey.

10. A number of delegations stated that as part of the restructuring process, staffing of the Centre for Human Rights should be strengthened. Other delegations stressed that staffing of the Department of Economic and Social Development should not suffer in the process.

11. A number of delegations considered that flexibility in human resource management needed to be enhanced. Other delegations expressed the concern about the flexibility proposed for the Secretary-General in the management of posts. A number of delegations expressed the view that the need for more flexibility in the management of vacant posts had not been proved, and that the Secretariat already had at its disposal procedures which allowed a rapid response to changing requirements. Other delegations proposed that the degree of flexibility in human resource management be regulated through consultations between Member States and the Secretariat.

12. A number of delegations expressed the view that the restructuring process should be extended to middle- and lower-level posts so as to bring about a sharply delineated division of responsibilities within the Secretariat in carrying out its activities in order to get rid of those of marginal significance or those that were unproductive and thus increase the overall efficiency of the Organization. A number of delegations emphasized the need for continued effort to identify such activities with a view to their eventual elimination.

13. With regard to the forthcoming phases of the restructuring process, a number of delegations pointed out that the effects of the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the eighth session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development had yet to be incorporated in the exercise, and that the review on the relationship between the Department of Economic and Social Development and the regional commissions had not yet been completed. A number of delegations stressed that the assumptions on the programmatic impact of the related restructuring should be made transparent.

Conclusions and recommendations

14. The Committee took note of the revised estimates for the programme budget for the biennium 1992-1993 and recommended that the General Assembly endorse the proposed reduction in the number of high-level posts. The Committee stressed that that reduction should enhance the decision-making capacity of the Secretariat while streamlining its structures, as well as contribute to the coherent implementation of all mandates of the Organization.

15. The Committee regretted the lack of information on the programmatic aspects of the revised estimates and recommended that the General Assembly be provided with such information. The Committee also recommended that the Secretary-General make available for its consideration and for the Assembly the relevant information on the various qualitative aspects of the restructuring process. Such reporting could take place in the context of the implementation of the relevant provisions of Assembly resolutions 41/213 and 46/232.

16. The Committee expressed the view that the proposals of the Secretary-General concerning the treatment of vacancies called for in-depth consideration by the bodies concerned. The Committee stressed that the issue of greater flexibility in the use of resources appropriated by the General Assembly had to be examined in the context of the existing financial rules and regulations of the Organization and bearing in mind the need for more transparency in the information being provided to Member States, including the information in the proposed programme budget and in the reports on programme performance and budget performance. Issues such as the use of workload analysis and the development of evaluation techniques were of importance for the capacity of Member States to exercise control over the implementation of their decisions on programme and budgetary matters.

17. The Committee confirmed that the restructuring exercise should continue to be carried out by the Secretary-General as Chief Administrative Officer of the Organization, in conformity with the provisions of General Assembly resolution 46/232, and that, in its view, consultations between Member States and the Secretary-General on the restructuring process were essential.

18. The Committee took note of the report on procedures and norms for the creation, suppression, reclassification, conversion and redeployment of posts (A/C.5/47/4), but expressed disappointment about the lack of substance in that report.

19. The Committee also took note of the proposal of the Secretary-General concerning 13 posts formerly attached to the UNCTAD subprogramme on trade among countries having different economic and social systems (see A/C.5/47/7), and recommended that the General Assembly approve that proposal, on the assumption that a final decision thereon be taken in the framework of the programme budget for the forthcoming biennium.

20. Furthermore, the Committee took note of the proposals of the Secretary-General with regard to the review of the efficiency of the administrative and financial functioning of the United Nations.

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II. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

C. Methodology for the preparation of the programme budget

1. At its 24th to 28th meetings, on 1 to 3 September, the Committee considered the report of the Secretary-General on the prototype of a new budget format (A/C.5/47/3).

2. The Committee recalled the recommendation it made on the prototype at its thirty-first session.

Discussion

3. Some delegations called for a study on the proper way of presenting capital expenditures in the programme budget, while other delegations called for a review of the structure of the medium-term plan and the programme budget.

4. A number of delegations considered the seminar on the methodology of the programme budget successful and the output useful.

5. The Committee was informed that section 19 (United Nations Centre for Human Settlements (Habitat)) was chosen as an example for the prototype because of its typicality.

6. A number of delegations cautioned against an increased amount of data and information and warned of the danger of micromanagement and the potential increase in the size of part two of the programme budget. Other delegations considered detailed information necessary.

7. A number of delegations were of the view that an indication of low priorities should be eliminated.

8. A number of delegations called for the consolidation of budget sections; others cautioned against that attempt.

9. One delegation suggested that the provision for staff assessment and income from staff assesment be deleted from the programme budget.

10. A number of delegations drew attention to the Financial Regulations and Rules concerning the transfer of resources between sections of the budget.

Conclusions and recommendations

11. With regard to the proposals contained in the report of the Secretary-General, the Committee recommended that the General Assembly approve the changes in the presentation of the programme narrative. The Committee also approved methodological changes such as the treatment of non-recurrent expenditures, capital expenditure and calculation of real rates of growth, on the understanding that further information on inflation, currency fluctuations and related technical issues would be provided by the Secretariat to the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions and the General Assembly.

12. The Committee recommended that the programme budget be presented in two parts; the Secretariat, in preparing that document, should emphasize simplicity and readability.

13. The Committee welcomed the proposal to highlight in the first part of the programme budget changes in programmes, including new and terminated activities; the Committee trusted that such changes would also be appropriately mentioned in the second part of the document presenting estimates by section. In general, the Committee recommended that the quality and exactness of the narrative be improved.

14. The Committee concurred with attempts at rationalizing the number and presentation of tables and annexes which accompany the text of the proposed programme budget.

15. The Committee emphasized the relationship between the budget and the medium-term plan. It noted that an improved programme budget from a programmatic viewpoint was still not a replacement for the medium-term plan. The Committee also emphasized the link between the budget and the outline.

16. The Committee recommended that the General Assembly give due attention to issues such as the relationship between mandates and programmes and the relationship between the structure of the Secretariat and the structure and number of sections of the programme budget.

17. The Committee recognized the need for the direct responsibility of programme managers in the implementation of mandated programmes. It emphasized that responsibility and accountability, as well as improvements in the techniques and methodology for evaluation and budget and programme performance reports, were essential for progress in the implementation of the programme budget and in the capacity of Member States to assess accurately the implementation of their mandates and decisions.

18. The Committee welcomed efforts at presenting in a uniform manner regular budget and extrabudgetary resources; the Committee acknowledged, however, the difficulties involved in forecasting levels of extrabudgetary resources and expressed the hope that improvements would be forthcoming.

19. The Committee welcomed the effort to rationalize tables in the budget wherever possible.

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II. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

Programme 33. Regional cooperation for development in Latin America and the Caribbean

1. At its 37th meeting, on 14 September 1992, the Committee considered proposed revisions to programme 33 (Regional cooperation for development in Latin America and the Caribbean) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/47/6 (Prog. 33)/Add.1).

Discussion

2. One delegation drew attention to the language used in paragraph 33.98.

Conclusions and recommendations

3. The Committee recommended the approval of the proposed revisions to programme 33 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997.

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II. PROGRAMME QUESTIONS

Proposed revisions to the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997

Programme 36. International protection of and assistance to refugees

1. At its 38th meeting, on 14 September 1992, the Committee considered proposed revisions to programme 36 (International protection of and assistance to refugees) of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997 (A/47/6 (Prog. 36)).

Discussion

2. One delegation suggested that the fourth sentence of the text proposed to replace paragraph 36.41 be expanded to reflect the positive outcome of the implementation of the returnees programme to Viet Nam.

Conclusions and recommendations

3. The Committee recommended the approval of the proposed revisions to programme 36 of the medium-term plan for the period 1992-1997, with the following modification:

In paragraph 36.45, after the words "South Africans" insert "and Afghans".